

Ashgrove Primary School

Assessment

Policy

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Version 1:3

Assessment Policy

Rationale

In Ashgrove Primary our children come from a variety of backgrounds and bring with them a wide range of abilities, experiences, preferred learning styles, personalities and interests. Through the breadth and balance of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, our pupils participate in a progression of learning experiences that are carefully structured to suit their needs. Assessment is an integral part of this process. It provides information with which to evaluate pupil strengths and weaknesses and the effectiveness of teaching and learning. It is then used to inform curriculum planning, the setting of children's targets and the provision of resources.

A commitment to Assessment for Learning (AfL) endorses the school's participation in the Northern Ireland Curriculum and demonstrates an ethos in which the personalities, strengths and needs of children are considered and addressed individually.

The Northern Ireland Curriculum uses the terms *Language & Literacy* and *Numeracy & Mathematics*. In relation to end of key stage targets, assessment units and benchmarking data the terms *English* and *mathematics* are used by CCEA.

Aims of Assessment

Through assessment Ashgrove Primary School aims to:

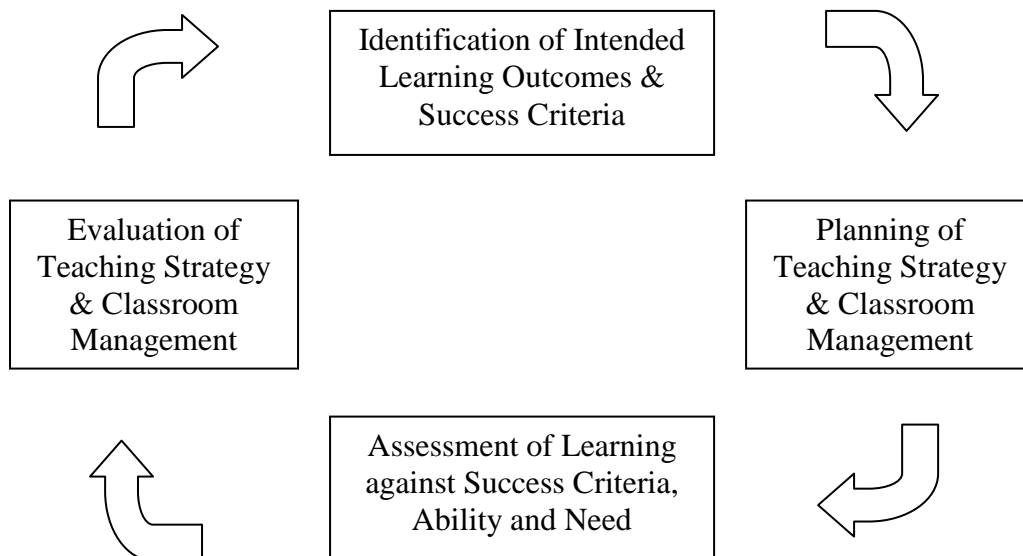
- provide each child, the teacher and parents with an indication of achievement and help to identify individual strengths and weaknesses;
- evaluate levels of children's learning against previous performance, personal ability and achievement by their peers;
- generate data with which to track children's progress over time;
- confirm and/or influence teachers' professional judgements;
- inform curricular planning for individual children (AfL);
- identify children who are gifted and/or talented;
- identify children with special educational needs;
- provide information on which to base future curriculum planning and resource decisions for year groups, key stages and whole-school;
- fulfil statutory requirements relating to assessment.

Assessment for Learning

The assessment of children's progress is an integral part of the cycle of teaching and learning in every class. Assessment, both formal and informal, contributes to this ongoing cycle.

In planning to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes appropriate to each child, teachers begin with pupils' abilities, needs, previous knowledge and interests. They then select activities, resources and forms of classroom organisation that will achieve these learning outcomes.

Assessment for learning enables teachers to judge the quality of learning against success criteria and to evaluate the need for further support, reinforcement or extension. It may also inspire new directions for learning through topic work, reading, ICT research, etc.



Marking

Even as a form of assessment marking should be meaningful, informative and positive; providing an indication of a child's achievement for both pupil and parent. The teacher's professional judgements of children's abilities, based on informal observations and on formal methods of assessment are an important source of evidence in the monitoring process.

Standardised Tests

Evidence is gathered and analysed from the results of standardised tests in English and mathematics from Primary 2 to Primary 7 (and on occasions in Primary 1). The formal assessment instruments that are employed include Middle Infant Screening Test (MIST), Progress in English and Progress in Maths.

Standardised test results enable teachers to identify specific strengths and weaknesses and so plan for future teaching and learning. This evidence may also be used to provide information about the work of a particular pupil in order to ensure that sufficiently challenging goals are set or, conversely, to indicate that the pupil's name should be placed on the Special Needs Register as he/she requires additional support.

(Following assessment in Primary 2, support is offered to the parents of children whose MIST scores give greatest concern. Most take up the offer of a place on the Forward Together programme.)

InCAS

DENI requires children in Primaries 4 – 7 to participate in the Interactive Computerised Assessment System (InCAS) in the autumn term. These tests are conducted with the use of individual laptops and the results are uploaded to Durham University for processing. Data is then returned to school for use in tracking the progress of individual children. Parents are invited to discuss their children's InCAS results during this first term.

End of Key Stage Assessment

Assessment at the end of each key stage forms an integral part of the overall school assessment programme and is used to inform curriculum planning. Results in assessment units in Primary 4 and Primary 7, and information in quality assurance folders, are also used in the statutory target-setting process. (Quality assurance moderation is carried out every three years on a whole-staff basis).

Target-Setting & Benchmarking

Throughout the process of identifying targets we try to be objective and evaluate the performance of Ashgrove in comparison to the performances of similar schools. During each school year the following cycle takes place:

- all teachers get to know the children in their care;
- each teacher discusses his/her children with the previous teacher and sets targets based on estimated levels at which individuals might reasonably be expected to be working in English and Mathematics by the summer term. DENI bench-marking statistics are used to inform judgements;
- end of key stage summaries of these targets are considered against DENI bench-marking statistics by the school's management team and by governors;
- teachers record the levels at which children are performing and retain representative samples of work;
- Year 4 and Year 7 assessments in the summer term include levels in English and Mathematics. These are judged against descriptors provided by CCEA. (The descriptors have been under review by DENI since the revision of the Northern Ireland Curriculum);
- Year 4 and Year 7 results are forwarded to CCEA for confirmation;
- teachers, management team and governors evaluate results against targets and benchmarking statistics;
- implications for planning are considered and, where necessary, issues such as resourcing and training are included in the school development plan.

New Admissions

In addition to using information forwarded by a previous school, teachers employ appropriate assessment procedures to ensure that children entering classes after September work at their own level and in suitable groups.

Record Keeping

Individual files are kept for each child. These contain samples of work, record sheets, completed tests and any other information relevant to the child's school experience. Information about

individual children and class attainment accompanies the class as it progresses through the school. This information may also be used by teachers when considering differentiation and other aspects of planning. Data relating to InCAS, standardised scores and SEN testing is stored on Assessment Manager, a component of the SIMS computer management system. This software enables the principal and teachers to track progress and compare performance with previous attainment, innate ability and the achievements of peers.

To promote self-esteem, to develop objectivity and to encourage pride in their work, pupils are involved in a process of self-assessment in which they are asked to comment on their work and select evidence of achievement for their files. Along with other evidence of personal achievement this contributes towards the Record of Achievement completed prior to leaving the school at the end of Key Stage 2.

Reporting

Reporting to parents on children's attainment is by means of:

- parent/teacher interviews in October and March;
- comments on written work, including homework;
- annual written reports;
- end of key stage assessment results; and
- informal meetings.

Reporting to the principal and teachers on children's attainment is by means of:

- class files containing test scores, etc;
- pupil files;
- Assessment Manager on SIMS;
- staff meetings;
- informal meetings; and
- end of key stage assessment results.

Reporting to pupils on children's attainment is by means of:

- teacher comment on class work, both oral and written;
- individual class reward schemes; and
- Record of Achievement in year 7;

Reporting to secondary schools on children's attainment is by means of:

- Primary 7 report;
- information relating to special educational needs; and
- any necessary communication between teachers/principals from both sectors.

Role of Assessment Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator ensures that members of staff are kept fully up-to-date with the legal requirements, developments and research in primary school assessment. The co-ordinator acts in liaison with external agencies such as CCEA as necessary.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.